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A MAN OF ARTISTIC IDEAS.

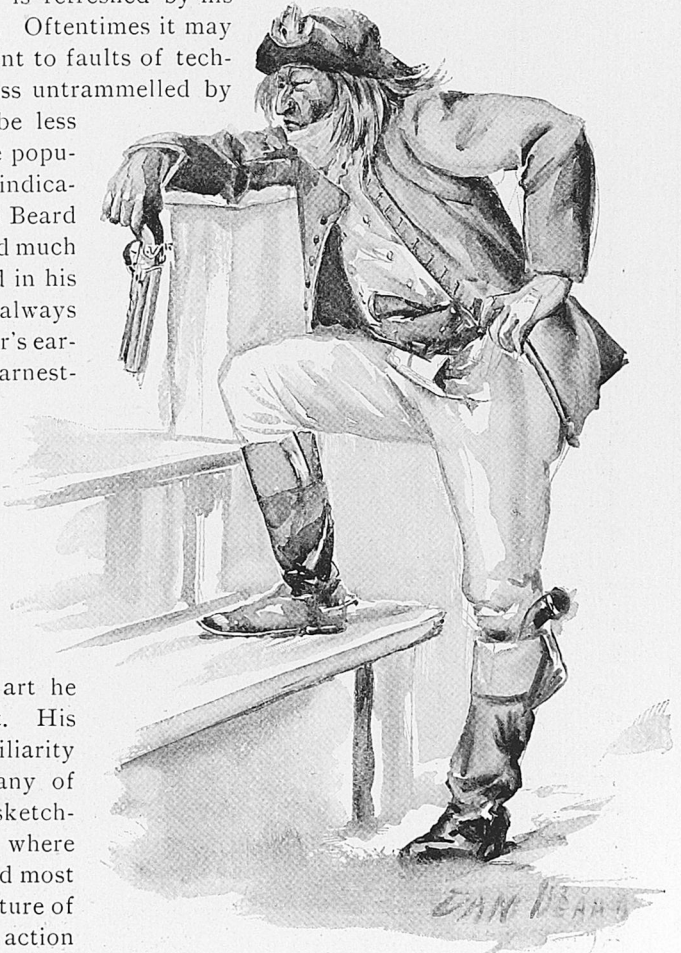
BY ARTHUR N. JERVIS.

(With original illustrations by Dan. Beard.)



O connoisseur or bumpkin, pictorial art holds nothing more affecting than the thought and feeling it stimulates in the beholder. In illustrative art it is peculiarly true that the spirit and significance of a fact in its relation to human life and sentiment are everything, while the fact of itself is nothing. Embodiment of the spirit and development of the meaning of the thing portrayed is a result invariably attained in the drawings of Dan Beard, artist and author. When looking at any piece of

his work, the conviction is imposed that it was done by a man who was thinking of something. It is evident that some distinct and positive conception preceded and accompanied the execution. He is one of the most ideaful of American illustrators. He brims with ideas. One is refreshed by his drawing as by a new thought. Oftentimes it may be easy, and just also, to point to faults of technique, but if he was any less untrammelled by formula he probably would be less forceful in expression. The popularity of his drawing is his vindication. In his personality Dan Beard is truly an all-around man, and much of his character is shadowed in his work. His drawing carries always an impression of the executor's earnestness. Sometimes it is an earnestness that is almost fierce, but usually it is lightened by the play of fancy, and the result is poignantly suggestive. He works while the idea has mastery over him, and in subjects of especial interest to him his touch yields a thrill. If chance had not led him into the aisles of art he might have been a naturalist. His love of nature and familiarity with it are expressed in many of his sketches, especially on sketch-book pages, those diaries where artists confide their truest and most secret affinities. Another feature of Beard's work is the intense action that hangs in every line; even his



"WAITING."



"DEEP-SEA FLIRTATION."

plant life seems to suggest its own growth. The dash and vim of his execution reminds those who know the man of his rugged, vigorous nature.

He has a strong featured and frank countenance, and it is framed by a straggling beard. His every tone and gesture manifest a native sincerity and earnestness. From his early camp-life he has preserved the off-hand *bonhomie* of the woods and plains, while with it is coupled the courtesy of the natural gentleman. In his character is combined the virility of a Viking with the gentleness and quick sympathy of a woman. Of all the gifted Beard family, Dan was the tardiest in coming to the fore as an artist. After passing his school days

in Cincinnati, where he was born on June 21, 1850, he went with his parents across the Ohio River to Covington, Ky. During the troublous times of the Morgan raids, when General Kirby Smith was besieging Covington, Dan was at home as the only man of the house. His father, the late J. H. Beard, N.A., the animal painter, was serving on the staff of General Lew Wallace; Harry Beard was south with the Thirtieth Missouri Regiment; Frank Beard was in West Virginia acting as special artist for Harper's, and J. Carter Beard, whose middle name is the maiden name of his mother, was in camp on the Ohio with the one-hundred-day men. Exact sciences give excellent discipline to the imagination, for the poet must be an analyst, and Dan with his lively fancy and quaint conceits took a thor-



"YANKEE DOODLE CAME TO TOWN."

ough course in mathematics. After his studies ended he obtained employment in an engineer's office, and subsequently was given an opportunity to set out upon insurance surveys in different parts of the country. This chance for travel he eagerly grasped, and the succeeding five years were spent by him in acquiring much of the resources which he has since drawn upon in his art work. His sympathies broadened rapidly, and his independence of thought led him into the fertile fields of new ideas in which he has since revelled. It was during his

life as surveyor, also, that he studied the ways of insects, of birds, beasts and fishes. He is essentially a sensitive to the facts of life, and his pieces are inspired by the impressions made upon him. He has, when he chooses, a way of showing the implications of facts which others are too phlegmatic to perceive. All sights and sounds of nature woo and charm him ; problems of human life and conduct have in him an enthusiastic student. Miseries and injustices bite him to the quick. With pen and pencil he reports his deductions, and the spirit of much of his work is due to the sting of his feeling.

He has a strong leaning toward allegorical and symbolical drawing, and toward delicate caricaturing. His subtle perception of the humorous and sharp sense of the ridiculous unite with a fertile fancy in yielding odd concepts. The travesty of the fact upon the

principle affects him keenly ; such situations he intuitively analyzes and represents vividly. As an illustrator he explores the subject thoroughly, and reaches subtle meanings. The idea behind the subject is always his model. Much of his best work was done in Mark Twain's book, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," and probably no better appreciation of his power could be induced than by reading the book without illustration first, and then note how much his work illumines the text, and brings out sharply the points which otherwise might be missed, or at least not fully relished. The circumstance which made Dan Beard a devotee of the Bristol-board was his meeting, in the summer of 1879, with the art manager of The Century Magazine. Beard had some studies of fish which had been drawn for his own edification, and to his surprise they were eagerly taken and paid for. Since then drawing and writing have occupied his time. The "American Boy's Handy Book," his first literary production, is still having a steady sale. He wrote the Tom, Dick, and Harry stories for St. Nicholas, and has contributed to the Youth's Companion and the Scientific American. "Six Feet of Romance," originally printed in The Cosmopolitan, has been included in one volume with "Moonblight," his latest literary effort, which is



"A WOODSMAN."



"AMUSED."



"TYPES OF LUMBERMEN."



"LOVE'S CRUCIBLE."

illustrated by himself. In his writing are dominant the same characteristics as in his drawing ; sharp, decisive strokes, which make you recognize the rugged, virile earnestness of the man, set before you the thought which moved the writer. No misinterpretation is possible ; there is no equivocation in the expression, it is bold, keen, and clear. Whether or not you agree with what he says, you are impressed by the clarity and the emphasis with which it is told, and you remember it. The town studio of Dan Beard is a delightful place to spend an hour or so. It is overflowing with old books, old armor, old guns, old swords, and a hundred and one quaint and artistic relics picked up in his travels and unearthed in odd places ; his summer studio is in a rugged mountain nook in Pike County, Pa. He resides at Flushing, L. I., where, after many unsuccessful efforts, his fellow townsmen eventually succeeded in persuading him to serve as a school trustee.

